

Stanhope (Charles) 3^d Earl of S.

6.59.9.28

MORAL EPISTLE,

RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

TO

EARL STANHOPE.

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MOORE EPISTLE

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DEDICATION.

IT has been said, and your Lordship must often have heard it, that titles add grace to Virtue. One might as well have argued that splendor is given to a diamond by setting it in gold: because, if unset, very probably it would not be exposed to view.—False jewels only thus receive their lustre. Nobility gives a person opportunities of displaying his worth, but his worth is not derived from his nobility. Hence I am willing to imagine that the observation which I have reprehended arose from gratitude. Perhaps it was the effusion of a sanguine author to a generous patron: however, this is not intended as any hint to your Lordship; for *patron* sounds to *me* so terrible that I would rather have an executioner than one. I only prefix what you are reading, by way of direction to my letter, and for the sake of declaring myself not the admirer of your titles but of your virtues. I am even bold enough to assert, that Fortune must either have been more blind or more insulting than usual, when she placed on the brow of STANHOPE the tinsel coronet for the civic wreath.

Feb. 25.

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wreath.

PREFACE.

I Know not by what fatality it happens, that those have been lately reckoned among the enemies of their country, who were before considered as her friends. But, without attaching myself to any party whatever, I think it proper to make a few very short observations. It strikes me, first, that people, when they talk on political subjects, often pretend to a kind of delicacy in forbearing to mention names; and authors very often have a similar scruple for a different reason. The former, because truth has been declared a libel, and because spies intrude themselves into every conversation: the latter fancy that even the *names* of certain men corrupt the paper with which they come in contact.

The data are just; but I disdain the conclusions. For, why should we hesitate to unmask the crimes? Is it because they are frightful? and are we, then, such

B

children?

children? Ought we not rather to shew the World that they are so, and explore by what magic they assume so imposing an appearance? I had said in the present Epistle, after mentioning a few characters which ancient and modern Times have produced,

'Twould tire the Muse, and awkward were the sight,
To drag into the radiant realms of light
Whatever monsters wretched England has,
Or Scotland—thrice accurst for each Dundas.

Though I am very sensible how long and how laborious a work it would be, yet, having begun it here, I shall continue it at my leisure. As I hate the form of a Satire, I shall continue the more agreeable contrast between excellent and execrable characters. A thousand of the latter may be thrown into the *shade* occasioned by one like Stanhope: while those who, regarding a Wyndham and a Portland, can trace honesty in the one and wisdom in the other, must have more penetration than the Physiognomist, or more fancy than the Poet. But, while there are in the cabinet, men who lament the misfortune of keeping six or seven servants, merely because two or three of them will cost an additional guinea; while there are

men

men who, possessing immense riches, barter away the liberties of their country for a little more; while there are men who, rather than contribute from their own superfluities to a war which their madness has kindled, take the morsel from the widow and fatherless whom they have rendered so—but to call such beings *men* is a libel on the human race—yet while there are such existing, there will always be a subject for *Moral Epistles*; and though they are the Jailors of Britain, their names shall be written in a calendar quite as legible and quite as durable as theirs.

man with a strong impulse to get away the
 land and sell country for a little more; while
 there the man who rather than contribute from their
 own property to a war which their medals has
 kindly sent the medals from the widow and the child
 whom they have rendered to—let to call such things
 are as a gift on the human race yet while there
 and last among these will always be a gift for
 moral cause; and though they are the fathers of
 history, their names shall be written in a chapter
 of the noble and noble as the noble as the noble

MORAL EPISTLE.

'T WAS when, awaken'd by their just alarms,
Our distant brothers call'd aloud to arms—
That Reason, darting thro' the clouds of Night,
O'er every Nation waved her heavenly light.
Then shook the palaces, in ages built
When Superstition lent her aid to Guilt.
I, unawakened, in my cradle slept,
Nor wept, unconscious I, while millions wept.
Blind to the moral and historic page,
Deaf to the Poet sweet, the solemn Sage—
In lisping accents hardly could I tell
Beneath what Hero proud Minorca fell:
What Hero, crown'd by Conquest each campaign,
Crush'd with Herculean strength gigantic Spain.
Now *France* has murmur'd to receive her laws
From Kings and Cossacs, Frederic's and Artois's:

Now

Now only Liberty supremely reigns
O'er those extended and extending plains :
With thee, O Stanhope ! gazing round the scene,
I judge futurity from what has been.
To anxious sailors, distant still from land,
A thousand visionary ports expand.
Thus, tho' the storms surround us, and the blast
On rugged rocks our helpless bark hath cast—
Hope from the summit smiles, and Halcyons play
Along the glimmering pale reflected ray.
But turn we round : behold how swiftly flies
The mist illusive that obscured our eyes !
Throned on a mountain, down whose side is roll'd
A rapid torrent tinged with sands of gold :
Whose barren height projects a chilly shade
O'er every cottage in the nether glade :
Where sleepless hellebore and bitter rue
Forbid the bee to sip their vernal dew :
Where nightshade twines the bower, and hemlock grows
With proud luxuriance round the wither'd rose—
Sits haggard Avarice ! with bloody hand
She grasps the sceptre of supreme command.
An iron sceptre ! o'er whose rugged head
A Stygian vulture's waving wings dispread.

But him the Goddess—if the dews of Sleep
His eyes so piercing chance awhile to steep—
Still guards protective, still in empty dreams
With hooked beak his harpy hunger screams.
Those eyes, half opening, roll with livid fire,
Those flagging feathers rustle with desire.
But roused from slumber, ever prompt to rove,
He grasps the thunders of the bird of Jove.
These far and wide he brandishes, nor cares
For widow wailings nor for orphan prayers.
The cruel Goddess hears the murmuring main
From sacred Indus to her Thames complain:
And sees thy children, Oh indignant Rhine!
Crushed by her votaries their lives resign.
They die—but vengeance is their latest breath—
Majestic in their pangs, and humbled but by Death
Alas, O Stanhope! in her hateful train
What Fiends innumerable still remain!
Some, not contented rashly to have hurl'd
The torch of Discord on a rising World;
At home disguise themselves in snowy vest,
Nor fear to thrust it in a mother's breast.
'Tis hence Religion from her shrine retires,
Hence Faith no longer fans her vestal fires:
Hence naked Commerce begs along the streets,
While mute Suspicion flies from all she meets.

Nay,

Nay, even Friendship, bursts her golden band!
 Kens one with caution ere she shakes one's hand.
 No longer gives she that accustom'd zest
 Which made luxurious e'en the frugal feast:
 Nor hold we converse, in these fearful days,
 More than the horses in your Lordship's chaise.
 Yet wine was once almighty! silent Care
 Fill'd high the bowl, and laugh'd at poor Despair.
 Wine threw the guinea from the Miser's hand,
 Wine bade his wond'ring heart with alien warmth
 expand.
 Made hope enjoyment, made the coward pant
 For battle, * parsons preach, and † poets rant.

But

* It is entertaining enough to hear the Clergy grumble at being driven from their *vine and fig-tree*, and calling upon us in the name of Religion to *strengthen the hand of Government against the enemies of Church and State*. In their lamentations over the *Martyr Charles*, there was a deal of extraneous matter to supply their divisions and subdivisions; but among all their execrations, and all their sighs, the fate of our slaughtered Countrymen seemed totally forgotten. The Poet Cowley was the apologist of Charles, and he thinks it very hard that a monarch should be put to death for *cropping off a few ears*. This was the ordinary punishment inflicted by the Star-Chamber; and so common was it, that the people appeared like so many *terriers*. The Puritans chiefly suffered under Charles. The hair of these people generally took a strait direction down the side of the head, as if it were fearful of discovering so ignominious a mutilation.

† The Writer of a Tragedy, the name of which I have forgotten, tells us that it is the duty of every one to write against the French;

but

But O the pleasures! when 'mid none but friends
 The trusty secret where it rises ends.
 At which no hireling politician stoms,
 No snoring rector catches, and *informs*.

But Bacchus! Bacchus!—round whose thyrsus
 Twined
 Tendrils and ivy playing unconfined—
 How art thou alter'd! I? yes *thou*, by Jove,
 Thou second Wyndham; what I say I prove.
 Tooke was on trial: Pitt was cited: came:
 Discovered treason raging; towers on flame;
 Daggers and pikes enormous, and a dart
 To fly *self-acted* at the Monarch's heart:
 But, questioned on his *own* account, each jot
 Of all he once had written he forgot.
 That which is real we forget with ease,
 But feign what never happen'd, when we please.
 The faults of others magnified are shown;
 We children turn the glass, and smile upon our own.
 But—honest Minister, or sound Divine—
 He lies who tells us there is truth in wine.
 but if every one wrote so bad as he, their wrists might ache before
 the effect were equal to the intention.

For

For George's Premier, never known to reel,
 Drinks his two bottles, Bacchus! at a meal.
 If ever, wand'ring from the hand of Truth,
 I join'd the Follies that encircle Youth—
 O may I perish ere of me be said,
 Those were my victims whom I first betray'd.
 But some there are who, *raving for our good*,
 Would tear the very hand that holds them food.

Go, get to kennel, New-found-land-dog * Reeves!
 Your loud alarm not a soul believes.
 Without or teeth to bite, or sense to hunt,
 You only wake the *Swine*, and make them grunt.
 Others there are who, spurning honest Fame,
 From foul Corruption wealth and titles claim.
 'Tis thus the chaplain, secretary, drudge,
 Rife into Bishop, Chancellor, and Judge.
 'Tis thus the Poet who has *art* to praise
 What *we* must execrate, may wear the bays.

* I shall not enlarge on the present worthy character, nor observe with what alacrity he performs the duties of his New-found-land office. It would be equally unnecessary to remark, that the disunion which lately prevailed in England was chiefly occasioned by the associated Terrorists, Alarmists, & Co. But people begin, at last, to distinguish their real benefactors from their pretended ones.

Anger

Anger and Sorrow prey upon the Muse,
 While some neglect her and while some abuse,
 Simon—for Simon is the golden calf—
 Feeds at his shrine one * poet and a half.
 Whate'er to *others* Pindus can produce
 Would hardly satisfy a hungry goose.
 Since *self* however has unbounded reign,
 By Plenty prosper'd I no more complain:
 Together daily tête à tête we dine,
 And frugal *Temperance* decants the wine.
 One afternoon I saw her, not in sport,
 Sip with her mouth awry the muddy port:
 Nay further, could you credit it, my Lord,
 She dropt, I recollect, a *naughty word*:
 “Damn it, if Ministers would not debar it,
 For half the money we might drink our claret.”
 Now what I answered guess: you say you know:
 “Art *thou* then *Temperance*?” exactly so.
 Well! and I added if she dar'd defame
 Her *foes* so grossly she should lose her name.
 Thus fly the Wretches who should lose their ears,
 From house of — into house of —;

* The Poet M. and Mr. R.

Nor, when the matters are so well arranged,
Doubt but their characters are also changed.
But think not, Stanhope! there were *never* those,
Who dared Corruption bravely to oppose.
Parham,—contented with his house and grounds
That brought him annual scarce four *hundred* pounds—
Whenever Duty call'd him, took his cane
And walk'd to London whether fair or rain.
Sometimes with Ministers he deign'd to chat,
Sometimes would *vote* for them, but seldom *that*.
Yet still—as Parham was a man revered,
As people loved him even while they feared—
They thought, by giving him a place, to raise
The voice of Britain louder in their praise.
They gave it. Parham in his *chariot* goes,
Not alter'd—only wearing cleaner shoes.
But once it happen'd some affairs of state
Required a little *ready-made* debate.
“ Let's go to Parham's.” They arrive. “ My Lord!
I come this morning just to speak a word.
An awkward subject starts to-day, we want
Your vote ; you know it.” *Yes ! but vote I can't.*
High words arose on this, and threats were used ;
In vain : they threaten'd still, he still refused.

“ My

" My Lord! however hurt at your *disgrace*,
 I hate dissembling—you must lose your place."
 Well! Sir! you cannot take my *legs*; thank God
 These still are left me, and I know my road.

This was a Noble: should you like to hear
 How acted Shippon, Parham's true compeer?
 You know 'twas Walpole's well-inform'd advice,
Shake but the money, all men have their price.
 To thee, O Stanhope! odd as it may sound,
 But one exception to the rule he found.
 'Twas Shippon. * Walpole, tho' the Scoundrel Court
 Were brib'd already, hoped for *his* support.

Came

* The Court of Walpole was infamous even to a proverb. Comparisons are odious: but a time undoubtedly has appeared, though the period shall not be instanced, when almost the whole of our worthy Representatives might join the Chorus in Sophocles—and say—

Οδ' ἐστὶν ἡμῶν ναυκράτωρ ὁ πᾶσι· ὅς' ἂν
 οὖλος λέγῃ σοι, πάντα σοι καὶ ἡμεῖς φάμεν.

" *This youth here is our pilot; whatever he tells you we also say.*"

Sophocles often is a Satirist. If he had lived in England, he certainly would have had his windows broken for freedom of speech. It is a pity, that in so immense a web of Scholia, as that which is entangled round this Author, one is not able to distinguish the Characters which he seems to have attacked. The Critics never observed that Sophocles joined Politics to Poesy; otherwise they certainly would have taken
 the

Came to his villa, mixt in his request
 Some hints of favour, soon more closely prest.
 Now Shippon rang the bell. Sir Robert's hips
 Tingled with strong presentiment of *whips*.
 A servant enter'd. " Boy, quoth Shippon, pray
 " What will thy Master dine upon to-day ?
 " *Sir ? mutton, Sir !* Speak boldly ; why abasht ?
 " Drest in what manner ? *Please your Honor ! basht.*
 " Go. See, Sir Robert ! faltering as he speaks
 " How honest blushes flash along his cheeks.
 " But he who, happy in a snug retreat,
 " Twice makes his dinner on a joint of meat—
 " May scorn the "*hear him*" of your servile tribe,
 " Nor sell his ruin'd Country for a bribe."

Parham ! and Shippon ! if each honor'd name
 Be not eternally preserv'd by Fame—

the pains to illustrate, as they went, the most striking characters of a most eventful age." This reflection led me to another—which is, that nothing would be more proper than that to every town, which had Representatives, there should every month be sent an account how they act. This account should be repositied in some place of safety, where they might refer to it whenever they please. They could *then* be no longer deceived ; and if there existed any undue influence it would be their own fault. Even this, however, would be nugatory, unless the Bill passes for a more general Reform.

Lie

Lie tranquil in your tombs ; and say "*Ye Powers
Of darkness ! it is Landor's fault, not ours.*"

We, Stanhope ! born in gloomier days than theirs,
Leave still a drearier prospect to our heirs.

We weep ; we can no more ; but thanks to God !

He never bound us to our native clod.

Led by the Deity, our souls embrace

With love fraternal all the human race.

Love, to our Country warmest, must expand

Its kindly fervor over *every* land.

Yet Slaves or Despots may, we know, destroy

The fruits of Plenty, blast the flowers of Joy.

True ! but enchain they *Zephyrs* in the tower,

Or rebel *Oceans* ? no : they have not power.

Fly we, then, thither, where their power must cease,

Where triumphs are prepared for Liberty and Peace.

FINIS.

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MOORE, J. H.

It is a very old and famous book, and it is a very good one. It is a very good one.

Wm. Thompson: born at Glasgow, Scotland June 18, 1790; died at New York City, N.Y., Jan. 1, 1868.

...we can no more; but I will to God.

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MUSEUM

Or, is it not so? no; they have not done.

and the principles are given for liberty and peace.

